



## Topic: Risky Health Behaviors

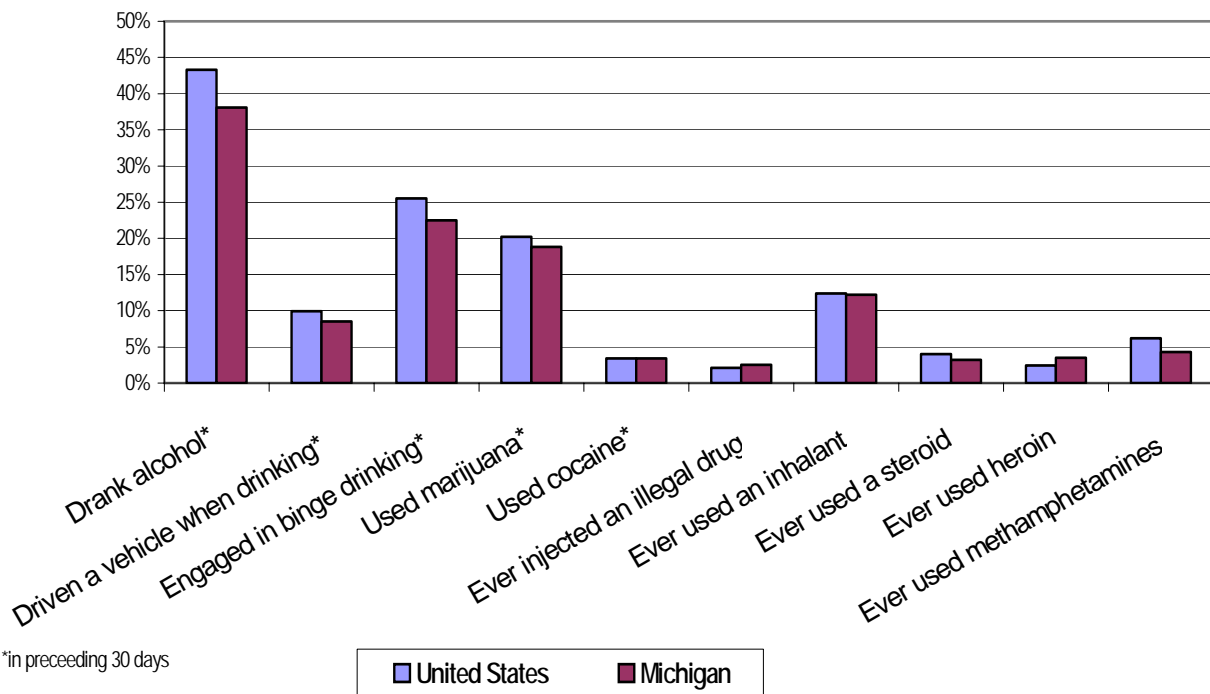
### 7. Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Use

Substance abuse affects not only an individual and his/her family, but also the welfare of the community. As a major contributing factor to crime and the need for social services, the costs of substance abuse far outweigh the resources committed to its prevention and treatment. The lifetime prevalence estimate of substance abuse and/or alcohol disorders is approximately one in seven Michigan residents, including about 100,000 youth.

Adolescent use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs is measured by the biennial Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). People who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcoholism than those who begin at 21.

*How are we doing?*

**Drug and Alcohol High Risk Behavior in Adolescents  
Michigan and the United States, 2005**



The 2005 Michigan YRBS reports 73% of its respondents had tried alcohol and 38% were current drinkers, 23% had their first full drink of alcohol before age 13, and 23% engaged in binge drinking, defined as the consumption of five or more alcoholic beverages during one occasion. There was a statistically significant decrease between the 1999 and 2005 results for all of these alcohol use indicators.



### ***How does Michigan compare with the U.S.?***

According to the YRBS, the percent of adolescents who identified themselves as having used alcohol and other drugs in Michigan was similar to the U.S. average.

### ***How are different populations affected?***

Twelfth graders were more likely than students in 9th and 10th grade to drink and binge drink. In general, White students were more likely than African-American students to be current alcohol drinkers and engage in binge drinking. Males were more likely than females to have reported using heroin. Females were less likely than males to have ever tried various illegal substances or to report recent use.

### ***What is the Department of Community Health doing to improve this indicator?***

Twenty-one programs within the state offer specialized substance abuse assessment, outpatient, intensive outpatient, and residential services to adolescents. The Department also continues to offer leadership and advisory support to Child and Adolescent Health Centers. They provide primary healthcare services to adolescents, including an evaluation of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and support for secondary and tertiary services. Health promotion and education are also offered.

Departmental prevention initiatives include information dissemination through newsletters and presentations, education, problem identification and referral, support for coalitions that raise awareness and mobilize communities for change, and environmental activities such as point-of-sale reduction activities and promotion of healthy lifestyles. The Department supports peer counseling, mentoring, life skills development, information and help lines, and other prevention programs.

Approximately \$13 million in substance abuse prevention and treatment block grant funds support substance abuse prevention efforts to communities. Substance abuse prevention needs in each region of the state are prioritized and addressed by incorporating the needs of the general population and the needs of high-risk groups, including youth. In addition, local agencies provide specialized services to additional populations, including African-American youth, gay/lesbian youth and Arab/Chaldean youth.

To address substance abuse among Michigan's citizens, the MDCH contracts with 16 coordinating agencies to develop comprehensive plans for substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation, and prevention services. Coordinating agencies provide treatment services to substance abusers, including women of childbearing age, pregnant women and children. Coordinating agencies develop and evaluate a network of funded, licensed substance abuse treatment providers within the geographic area.

The Department works with local criminal justice agencies, education providers, grassroots organizations, and other state agencies to reduce and prevent adolescent substance abuse, to restore neighborhoods, and to educate the children of Michigan about the dangers of substance abuse. Programs such as the Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking (MCRUD), a coalition of prevention partners, focus on underage drinking issues through grant awards and support of local coalitions.